HINTS ON
JAPAM AND DHYANAM

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To Sm. Uma Ramamurthy
with kind regards of
Swami Deshikananda
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HINTS ON
JAPAM AND DHYANAM

"With your mind and intellect absorbed in me,
You will surely come to me"

"Proclaim it boldly that my devotee never perishes"

"No evil befalls a man who does good"

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TO

SADHAKAS AND MUMUKSHUS

PREFACE

At the very outset, let me confess that I can lay little claim to erudition and scholarship, nor am I unaware of my limitations in dealing with this art-science, which is known as Raja-Vidya, Kingly Science or the Science of sciences, and which is also generally known as Atma-Vidya or Brahma-Vidya. This Science, let me add, has bewildered *Pundits*, scholars and savants. But all the same, I do in all humility claim to be a *Mumukshu* or *Sadhaka.*

It may be asked, where is the necessity for a brochure of this kind in this secular State of ours, when all the people are engaged in striving hard to evolve a Welfare State with a socialistic pattern of society, by promoting the economic and social conditions of the people. The meaning of a secular State is, that it is neither an ecclesiastical nor a theocratic state. But it does not mean that the State is anti-religious. It means and connotes, as is evident from the Indian Constitution, that the State will not identify itself with any one religion as State Religion, but will accord equal rights, treatment and freedom of worship to the followers of all religions.

Our cultural heritage is essentially spiritual. If we attempt to give it up and follow any other ideal, we will be but a lost nation as a body without soul, and we would simply perish as a nation. Each nation should evolve and progress according to its own particular genius and heritage which, if substituted by any other ideal, will lead to sure death. Swami Vivekananda, the patriot monk of India said, "In India religious life forms the centre, the key–note of the music of national life," and added, "Therefore, before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, the land should be first deluged with spiritual ideas." Mahatma Gandhi was, above all else, a man of religion and spirituality, and was an embodiment of our culture and heritage. Truth was his ideal and goal of life, to attain which, he practised truthfulness (Satya) and non-violence (Ahimsa) as the *Sadhana*. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru is reported to have said, in his convocation address at Shantiniketan, that "India cannot afford to forget the essence of the Indian way of life, the spiritual and moral attainments which have helped her to survive the rise and fall of civilizations through the ages." If, therefore, we neglect or ignore our culture and heritage, we shall do so at our own peril.

Even from a pragmatic point of view, religion (Vedanta) would stand us in good stead. For no other force has, we know, done so much for the well-being of peoples as Vedanta has done. If this world is to unite for common welfare, if there should be peace on earth, and good will among men, it cannot be done through Science or Technology, or on the basis of politics or economics. It can be secured only on the basic foundations of the Religion of Love and the God of Love. Peaceful co-existence of nations with different ideologies is possible on the background of our heritage which is based on unity in diversity, unity of existence, harmony of religions and divinity of man, and unity of God.

And so long as man is what he is, and so long as he is not satisfied with the pleasures that this world brings him, and is longing for unmixed and abiding happiness, so long as man strives to obviate, avoid or conquer Death, which is staring at his face every moment of his life, Atma-Vidya or Brahma-Vidya is a paramount necessity. For, it alone can solve the riddle and problem of life now, as it has done in the past. This is the rarest privilege of man, as man alone can ratiocinate between life and death, happiness and unhappiness, the real and the unreal. We should, therefore, seize this opportunity, as there is no knowing whether we will be born again as men in the next life.

Two sets of persons, we are sure, do not need religion or God, the man-God and the man-brute. To the former, it is indeed superfluous as he is divine already. And as for the latter, he can little understand its implications, as it is beyond his ken or knowledge and scope of life, due to the subtlety of the science as such. In between these two patterns of people and life, all other persons need it as an universal panacea and a sovereign remedy for all the ills of life on earth.

In sending out the thoughts embodied in this little brochure to the *Sadhakas*, my only apology is to share these thoughts with those, who are of my temperament and bent, and I do hope that it would also render a small service to the readers as it has done me.

The contents of this brochure are mostly extracts of my letters to friends, who did not allow me to remain quiet. These extracts were later collected and given to me for further amplification and elucidation by friends to whom my thanks are due. And I am grateful to those friends, who have borne the cost of printing it.

May we have love and devotion unto God, and may God shower His blessings on us!

Aum Tat Sat.

SALEM
March 14, 1956

Swami Deshikananda.

Hints on Japam and Dhyanam

Man is variously defined. Man is a rational animal, says Plato. Animals generally live by instinct, but the human-animal can exercise his reason and differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad and true and false, so that he may avoid misery and attain happiness by such ratiocination or discrimination in life. Man is a gregarious or a social Animal, says Sociology. Somehow man always likes to live in groups, probably to obviate danger. Due to the fear instinct and the instinct of self-preservation, he lives a corporate life. As such, segregation and seclusion are foreign to his very nature. Man is a bundle of fundamental instincts, which he has to sublimate, so that he might naturally be able to live a peaceful and happy life, says Psychology. Man is the Lord of creation, says the Bible. He subjugates and lords over all the other creatures and things of the world. And man alone has the rare privilege of using and exercising the unique common-sense and reason, so that he may live up to a life of peace, and happiness. Man is essentially and potentially divine, says Vedanta. Man is not a mere psycho-physical being, actuated by conditioned reflexes. The various descriptions of man, as said above, are all fundamentals. Man thinks and ratiocinates; man is a social animal with a bundle of fundamental instincts; man is lord of the world and potentially divine. Therefore, man has

Jews worship God as Jehova, the Christians as the Father in Heaven and the Muslims as Allah. God is One; He is invoked by various names in various forms by the votaries of the different religions. Each one of these forms is a facet of the God, Who is the Truth-Absolute. God is considered by the dualists, according to their respective scriptures and theology, as endowed with infinite number of good qualities, *Sarva-Kalyana-Guna-Nidhi.* This is generally what is known as anthropomorphism, i. e., devotees attributing human forms, qualities and personalities to their respective gods. All the dualist and theist worshippers who follow Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, regard this Personal aspect of God as the highest and ultimate reality. And they pray to Him for all kinds of things, including salvation in Heaven, which is mostly a kind of associateship after death, with the Lord in His abode called Heaven. There the devotees have fellow-ship with God and enjoy intense happiness. And the Hindus particularly believe further that at the end of the cycle which is known as *Pralaya* or dissolution of the Universe, the votaries who are not to be born again to work out the remaining *Karma* (result of action) merge and become one with the Lord, their God. This is known as *Krama-Mukti* or gradual liberation. The others are born again in this world (after the enjoyment in heaven) to work out their remaining *Karma*, the result of actions in their previous or past lives.

to sublimate and transform all these fundamental instincts, so that he may reach the goal of life, by realizing his very nature which is divine or God. Man has come from God and he must get back to God, as theists would put it. Human birth is the noblest and most blessed of all births; because man alone can know and realize God, the Truth, which is man's real nature. The aim and objective of life, according to Vedanta, therefore, is to unfold, manifest or develop and realize man's true nature which is divine and the realization of which gives ineffable peace and bliss. The following pages in this essay attempt to show how the real Self or the nature of man, which is divine, can be achieved, attained and realized, so that man in his pilgrimage of life in this world can reach the *summum bonum* of life.

II

Traditionally speaking, there are two forms or ways of worshipping God—the path of Love (Bhakti) and the path of Knowledge (Jnana). First, the Personal God is worshipped in His diverse aspects as noted and explained in the respective scriptures of dualistic and theistic religions, such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity and the different sects of Hinduism, e. g., Shaivaism, Shaktaism, Vaishnavaism and so on. The mass of devotees all the world over worship God in this, the Personal aspect of God. For example, the devotees among the Hindus, who are dualists and theists worship God as Shiva, Kali, Rama, Krishna, Narayana, Vishnu and so on. The

This path of Love or *Bhakti Marga* is natural and comparatively easy, because love is innate and natural to all living beings. But instead of loving the fleeting objects of the senses, one has to divert and direct that love towards God, who is Personal. This is a positive method, in that one has not to give up anything in this path. In the Bhagavatam, it is stated that a devotee or a votary of God while adoring Him may have any one of the following relationships with his *Ishtamurti* or the Chosen Deity, whom he worships as personal God. First, *Shanta Bhava*, which is a peaceful form of reflection and contemplation of God in seclusion, away from the bustle and din of people, as the *Rishis* worshipped and prayed to God in times of yore. Secondly, *Dasya Bhava*, the attitude of a servant, *Dasa*, to his master, as is portrayed in the case of worship of Sri Ramachandra by Hanuman. In this worship, the votary looks up to God as his Master and himself, as the servant of the Lord. In this, the devotee works for and serves the Lord alone, making Him as his goal. He is not attached to the results of his works. Thirdly, *Sakhya Bhava*, as an intimate friend, just as Arjuna treated and worshipped Sri Krishna even as a friend would treat another friend of his. Fourthly, *Vatsalya Bhava*, as a mother treats her loved child; the votary looks up to God as the child, as mother Yeshodha among the Gopis of Brindavan worshipped Sri Krishna as her own beloved child. That is, the devotee assumes the position of a mother while worshipping the Lord as her child. And fifthly, *Madhura Bhava*, in the pattern of life as a lover and the beloved, which was done by Radhika of the Bhagavata fame while worshipping Sri Krishna, or as the Gopis in general worshipped Lord Krishna, Who was known as *Gopijana-Vallabha*. In this way, God becomes nearer and dearer to the devotees. Hence love for God, or *Bhakti*, is defined as *Parama-Prema-Swarupa*, embodiment of supreme love for Him. It is also a kind of deification of human instincts in relation to God, while He is being worshipped. All this is a kind of sublimation of the base human instincts, for one's own well-being and progress in life. It is worthwhile perusing, if not studying, the Narada Bhakti Sutras and the Bhagavatam to know what *Bhakti* or devotion to God is.

In this mode of life, which is known as *Bhakti-marga* (Path of Love) neither the world nor the inidvidual personality of the worshipper is denied. There is also a wide scope and full play for emotion in it. One can have all kinds of varied rites, rituals and ceremonials in the form of *Pooja* (Worship) of his *Ishtamurti* or Chosen Deity. God, Soul and World are not denied, as all are taken as realities in this path. The end and aim of life is, according to the Hindus, to know and realize God as the ultimate substratum of world and soul, and also as non-separate from the votary or worshipper. Soul and world depend upon God as parts and whole. But the followers of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and some of the Vaishnavas among the Hindus do not even go so far. According to them, God creates all living beings and the world ; and God, Soul and World are real, and are three different and distinct entities. A true and enlightened devotee is he, who loves God without any motivation and has no fear of hell and punishment for the wrong-doings. He worships and loves God for the sake of love and without begging for anything. God should be worshipped by the devotee becoming God Himself. That is to say, the devotee should get rid of all his impurities and endeavour to become perfect, by giving up all the desires. This is to become God.

In the following pages, we have endeavoured to describe how a devotee or a votary (worshipper) of God can practise Japam and Dhyanam for the realization of his *Ishtamurti*. A hard boiled devotee (Bhakta) worships God, as non-separate from Him and strives hard to merge himself ultimately in his object of worship by the practice of Japam and Dhyanam. The half-baked Vedantins among the Hindus, on the other hand, believe that Personal God is but the creation of one's own imagination, for security, or freedom from fear, troubles and tribulations. And he may even go to that length of saying that religion is a dope and also an escapement mechanism of the credulous and gullibles ! No, far from it. So long as one's individuality and the world are taken as true, God is equally true. He cannot, according to the Vedanta, maintain the reality of himself and the world, and deny the reality of Personal God. So the Hindu tradition and scriptures assert that Personal God is not unreal or illusory in the sense as the horns of a hare are. Nor is it the mere imagination or creation of the human mind. According to the Vedanta, Brahman, which is Pure Consciousness when It associates Itself with the cosmic ignorance or Maya as Its adjunct, is known as Iswara or Personal God. And the same Brahman or Pure Consciousness when It comes into contact with Avidya or ignorance, which is a part of the cosmic ignorance or Maya, is known as the Jiva or individual self. But Personal God lords over Maya (cosmic illusion) which does not affect God in the least, as it (Maya) is subservient and subordinate to Him. Jiva, on the other hand, is under the sway of Avidya (Illusion), and hence Jiva is affected by it. God knows His nature, source and origin always, but Jiva is ignorant of its nature, source and origin, being under the delusion of Avidya. Brahman or Pure Consciousness is the ground of both Iswara and Jiva. Again, as said already, the Absolute Truth or Brahman, when reflected or associated with the *Suddha-Satva* of the Maya, becomes Personal God or Iswara. So long as man, we repeat, believes in the reality of his own empirical personality and admits the reality and existence of the world, he cannot deny the existence of a Personal God, to whom he prays for solace and freedom from fear and grief. And the tradition is, that those who forget this fact and attach undue importance and significance to world, self or ego, forgetting Him, suffer from fear, grief and misery in the series of births and deaths. So, the devotees and votaries pray to God for the cessation of births and deaths, and strive hard to tread the paths of virtue and goodness so that they may, after death, live with Him in Heaven.

This path which is a positive one full of love, is the religion of the ninety-nine per cent of the devotees and especially of the masses all the world over. It is also more natural, because the Personal God is worshipped by the devotees as a Master, Friend, Child, Lover and so on, as we have stated already. When the mind is attached to the objects of the world and senses, the votary suffers from delusion, grief and misery, but when the same mind is attached to God, he enjoys bliss in the company of his Lord, Who is all bliss and embodiment of bliss. This is also theism, which is the religion of the great majority of people, who follow Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. In fact, it is the religion of the world. "Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by sacrifice can I be seen as thou hast seen me. But by single-minded devotion I may in this Form be known ....," says the Lord in the Gita. Intense longing or yearning for God will lead to God realization.

There is another path, *Jnana marga*, other than the one delineated above, which is known as non-dualism, *Advaita-Vedanta*. It is the path of knowledge and reason. It repudiates the ultimate reality of a personal God, self (or soul) and the universe. It recognises degrees of reality of Truth, such as *Pratibhasika Sat* (illusive reality), *Vyavaharika Sat* (empirical reality) and *Paramarthika Sat* (Ultimate reality). For example, the mirage is *Pratibhasika Sat*, the objects of the world are *Vyavaharika Sat* and God, the Absolute Truth, is *Paramarthika Sat*. This path demands the *Mumukshu* (Seeker of Truth) to go beyond and above the senses and sense objects and, consequently, beyond all dualities. Thus, it preaches the Absolute Truth, which is the only Ultimate Reality and which is transcendental and supramental. The non-dualist (Advaitin) or the follower of the path of Knowledge should have, first and foremost, clear and constant discrimination, (*Viveka*), between real and unreal, true and false, (*Nitya-anitya vastu viveka*); he should thence renounce the desire for happiness both here and hereafter; he should have a sharp and steady mind as a result of having lived a life of continence, calmness, self-control, forbearance, concentration, etc., and above all, he should have the yearning, earnest longing and sincere faith and determination to attain the goal of freedom (*Mumukshutwam*). Then and then only he can become a fit person (Adhikari) to practise non-dualism which in the Upanishads, is also known as negative path

(*Neti-marga*), or *Jnana-marga*, as different from the path of devotion or *Bhakti-marga*. Through the process of constant reasoning and discrimination, the non-dualist negates step by step everything that comes under the purview of the mind and senses. He negates and eliminates by discrimination the objects of the universe, perceived by the mind and senses in the waking state, including his own body, mind and ego, and also the objects of dream experience. Thus he realizes the Ultimate Truth, which is Pure Consciousness and which is the substratum of the whole of existence. Here in this kind of experience the individual mind ceases ultimately, to function and operate, and hence the cessation of the awareness of objects, world and one's own individuality or personality. This state is technically known as *Samadhi*, *Brahmistiti*, or *Nirvana*. And the Gita describes this as a transcendental state: "When he realises and experiences that infinite bliss which is perceived by the pure intellect, *Buddhi*, which transcends the senses and established wherein he never departs from his real state, and having obtained which, he regards no other acquisition superior to that and where established, he is not moved even by heavy sorrow,........" In that state one crosses grief and delusion (*Tarati-shoka and Tarati-moha*) and goes beyond the happiness and misery (Sukha and Duhkha) of this world. Thus the votary reaches immortality and frees himself from all desires. *Tarati shokamatmavit*, i. e., the knower of Atman crosses grief. *Tatra ko* *moha kah shoka ekatvam anupashyatah*, that is to say, then what delusion, what sorrow can come to the Sage who beholds that oneness? This realization of ineffable and abiding peace, unalloyed and unmixed happiness, is the goal of the non-dualist Vedantin. As this is the most difficult path, very, very few attempt this, and fewer still succeed. In the scriptures it is described as walking on the edge of a razor.

III

Now let us discuss the practice of Japam and Dhyanam, which enables us to realize God or Self. We can at best deal here only with hints for practising Japam and Dhyanam. Prayer, of course, precedes and succeeds Japam and Dhyanam. Prayer is sincere yearning for God. As food is necessary for the gross body, prayer is necessary for the Soul. All the malaise in the world today is to be traced to the neglect of prayer.

Before we settle down to practise Japam and Dhyanam, it is better to tell ourselves that God is dearer than all the dearest things of the world for He is our own Self. By realizing God or Self, one goes not only beyond doubt and delusion, sorrow and misery, death and birth, but enjoys eternal peace and unmixed joy. The end and aim of life in general is happiness. This God-realization is, therefore, the objective of life. And this fact, that one can attain

Thus when one has perfected the means, one should sit up in a quiet and lonely place to practise the control of mind and senses for the purification of the mind and heart. A separate room is always better, if one can afford it in his own house. This control of mind, senses and desires can be attained more easily by worshipping mentally the symbol of one's *Ishtamurti* or the Chosen Deity to start with. This should follow the external worship of deities or Gods, with the rites and rituals. It is technically known as *Manasa Pooja* contrasted with the *Pratika* or *Pratima-Pooja* i. e., worship done to the images in places of worship (Temples) with flowers, incense, lights, etc. The latter is known as *Bahya-Pooja* or external worship. *Manasa-Pooja* is carried on in the same way as *Bahya-Pooja*, with this difference that ceremonials, rites and rituals are done only mentally. Instead of flowers, sandal paste, incense, offerings of food, waving of lights, etc., that are used and required for *Bahya-Pooja*, one imagines and offers those things mentally when one is doing the *Manasa-Pooja*. This *Manasa-Pooja* helps the aspirant, *Sadhaka*, more than any other way to focus the mind and to bring his mind to dwell upon his *Ishtamurthi* continuously, without distractions and thus to practise an unbroken contemplation on the deity. And this further helps the sincere initiate to practise Japam and Dhyanam without much difficulty. This *Manasa-Pooja* should, therefore, precede regular Japam and Dhyanam, so that it would help eternal unalloyed joy and peace that passeth all understanding, by the realization of Self or God, has to be first heard, *Shravana*, from those who have had the knowledge and experience of it. Then this fact should be reflected over and over, *Manana*, and all doubts regarding it clarified; and, lastly, it should be meditated upon and acted up to, *Nididhyasana*, and realized, so that one might have the experience of what one has heard and reflected upon. This kind of experience alone, and not intellectual assent or even conviction can satisfy the enquiring and speculative minds, even as the proof of the pudding is in its eating and tasting. The knowledge and experience of a thing alone can set us at rest and make us feel contented and happy.

For spiritual practice, one needs a very pure mind and sharp intelligence. This should accompany a body which is in good and healthy condition. For a successful and comfortable journey to a place of destination one needs to maintain his automobile in good condition. Even so should the body and mind be kept in good condition in the pursuit of Self (or God) realization. Then only can one strive hard to achieve it. A healthy body and sharp mind are, therefore, the pre-requisites. To this end one should take physical exercises regularly and systematically, and nourish and maintain the body with simple, good and nutritive food. He should command admirable forbearance, patience and sincerity as well.

the *Sadhaka* to keep his mind in a proper state and mood to further his practice. And, generally, it gives the *Sadhaka* also a kind of satisfaction of having the *Pooja* (Worship) done to the deity, by himself. External worship with materials like flowers, incense, etc., is the lowest form of worship, which is the first lesson or step in the religious life. *Manasa-Pooja* is much higher than this. Because, in the former, *Pratima Pooja*, the mind of the votary or worshipper may often wander away, whereas in the latter (*Manasa-Pooja*), mind is fully engaged and as such, gradually brought under control of the *Sadhaka*. External *Pooja*, more often than not, becomes mechanical in practice.

The purpose of all the *Sadhanas* or practices is to purify the mind and heart and bring the mind under control. To achieve this, the initiate, *Sadhaka*, has to be particularly careful in his food and recreations. A temperate and golden mean of life is a *sine-qua-non* in this. That is to say, one should not overdo in eating and recreation ; he should be both moderate and temperate in his activities and mode of life. Not only the food must be pure, but all that one gathers through one's other senses like smell, sight and touch, etc., should be pure and wholesome. All these which we gather from outside through mind and senses are indeed food. When all these foods are pure and wholesome, the mind becomes pure and steady. And this would go a good way to help the *Sadhaka* in the practice of God-contemplation by improving the *Satva* (good and pure) element in him. The nature of mind and qualities of body depend mostly on the food we take, and the pattern of life we lead. A young plant needs the protection of a fence. So, a *Mumukshu* (Seeker of Truth) needs protection in his early life from the evil influences of bad company. Hence *Sat-Sanga* (company of the holy) is advocated for him.

Early hours of the morning when mind can easily be concentrated on God, are better for Japam and Dhyanam, as the atmosphere would be quiet. When the *Sadhaka* is seated in his easy and firm seat in a quiet and lonely place, in a peaceful atmosphere, let him practise Japam fixing his whole mind on God, without thinking of anything else. Japam is the repetition of the name of God with a mystic syllable attached to it. For example: "OM NAMO NARAYANAYA" is the formula, *Mantra*, given to the votary of Sri Narayana. He should practise this Japam fixing his mind on and gazing at the form of Sri Narayana without thinking of anything else. It is better to think of the form in the heart of the *Sadhaka*. If one cannot think of the form of Lord, one can begin with the form of a candle light or the flame of a lighted lamp and consider it to be the light of Lord and thus practise concentration. By this way, one can also gather and focus the distracted and vacillating mind to one-pointedness. This should be done gradually, steadily and methodically but firmly. Whenever the restless mind wanders away from its object of contemplation, he should curb and control it and bring it back to the object of contemplation. Mind is compared to a monkey, which is always restless. That restless creature drinks intoxicating liquor and when so intoxicated is stung by a scorpion and further, to crown all that, it is possessed by a ghost! Mind is naturally, as we know, restless. It drinks the wine of worldly possession and is stung by the scorpion of '*Mamata*', '*Me*' *and* '*Mine*', name and fame, and looking down upon others contemptuously, and, finally, is possessed by the ghost of a swelled Ego, *Ahamkara*. Now to control this kind of mind is the problem and the one objective of the *Sadhaka*. For, a pure peaceful and controlled mind alone can reflect on God. Blessed indeed are they, who have pure, tranquil mind and heart, for they shall have God-vision. God is not at all partial to any one, but only reflects Himself in pure, devout and tranquil minds, even as the sun reflects itself on the smooth surface of things and objects. When the *Sadhaka* can renounce all the bad and unhealty desires born of attachment to the world, wealth and family, his mind becomes steady, calm and pure, and then it can easily be brought under control. Self-realization involves God-realization and God-realization involves Self-realization. As one goes on practising sincerely, the attachment to the world and its objects would gradually become less and less, and finally falls away from him.

This difficulty of mind control had confronted even a hero like Arjuna, nay, it has been the insurmountable difficulty of all, from the dawn of humanity. Arjuna plaintively tells Baghavan Krishna that he (Arjuna) may be able to control even strong gales and winds but not the restless and turbulent mind. Sri Krishna concedes it, and tells him that the mind is truly restless and difficult to control. But, the Lord says, it may be brought under control by repeated practice with *Vairagya* (renunciation), and discrimination (*Viveka*). By discriminating the real from the unreal, the true from the false, the right from the wrong, the ternal from the non-eternal, mind becomes steady; and this must be accompanied by constant reflection and perception of evils of birth, death, old age, illness and grief. Control of the mind is hard to attain for one, who does not take to repeated, sincere and regular practice, *Abhyasa*, and who does not also perceive the evil and transitoriness of this world including one's own body and its aggregates. God or Self cannot be realized by one, who is addicted to evil habits and who lacks the control of mind and senses. "He who has not turned away from wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued, and whose mind is not at peace cannot attain the Atman ...." says the Upanishad.

The author of the Gita, therefore, directs the *Sadhaka* to practise the following virtues as a means to control the mind from its vagaries: humility, unpretentiousness, non-injuriousness, forbearance, uprightness, fearlessness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control; giving up of sense-objects and also egoism; reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, and sickness; non-attachment to son, wife, home, etc.; constant practice of even-mindedness in good and bad, in success and failure; practice of devotion unto God in a lonely place and avoidance of the company of the undesirables. These are the means conducive to knowledge, and help easy control of mind and senses. That is to say, one should give up all desires for the sordid things of the world and the enjoyment of the same. For, that mind which follows in the wake of the senses for the enjoyment of their objects, misses its objective in life and is ultimately lost. Not only this, such a mind unwittingly makes the *Sadhaka* commit unsocial or anti-social acts due to unsatisfied and frustrated desires. Uncontrolled mind and senses act as one's own enemy and thus pave the way for grief and misery. An aspirant should practise this-wise, by discrimination, to have control of the mind, which when achieved, he will have fought the internal enemy of uncontrolled mind and senses, successfully. The end and aim of all practice is to achieve this objective. When an initiate or *Sadhaka* achieves this state of tranquillity of mind, then his mind itself acts as his sure and unfailing guide in his quest of God-realization or Self-realization. In fact, pure mind which is bereft of evil desires is Atman itself. Gurus and Preceptors can, at best, act as guides and only suggest things to the aspirant, the *Sadhaka*. The blessing of one's own mind is much more essential and imperative than that of Gurus, or Teachers. For, an impure mind is like a devil's workshop! So, mind must be made pure and calm, at any cost, by eliminating all impure desires and then that mind cannot but co-operate and help the *Sadhaka*. By longing and yearning for God, and eliminating desires of the senses, without the sense of 'Me' and 'Mine', one attains peace and tranquillity. All sorrow is destroyed in tranquillity. The mind and intellect in that state will be established in firmness and can concentrate easily on God. The Gita speaks of such a person as a *Sthitaprajna*.

Japam is, as stated above, repetition of the name of God, fixing one's mind on the object of worship without the thought of anything else. Why should we do Japam on God? Because, what we think that we become. If we constantly think and reflect upon an object, our mind will naturally take that form and become that object itself. Name and form, idea of an object and the object, are invariable concomitants. That is to say, one cannot think of the one without the thought of the other. The name and the object signified by the name, are inseparable. The name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are one. Thought and word are inseparable. To think of an object is to form a mental image of that object in the mind. So all thoughts are forms of the mental images of external objects or things. Why should we not think of evil? Because our mind would take the form of evil when we think of evil. Also all the evils that are in the atmosphere come to our mind, and crowd into it, even as the radio when tuned on to different wave lengths, gets the news of the far off places like America, Japan, England and other places, from the atmosphere through the aerial. The same thing happens if we think what is good. So, the *Sadhaka* is forbidden to think of evil things. For, if he thinks of evil, not only does he think of evil projecting it into the outside world, but also he gathers all evils from the atmosphere and takes them in A *Mumukshu* (Seeker of Truth) is asked to attune his mind to God-level and thus contemplate all the attributes of God. This is also known as *Sagunopasana* or the worship of God with His qualities. Forms are the symbols of these gunas, used for the convenience of the aspirant.

When we perceive the external objects through the senses, they are known as percepts; and when we conceive them through the mind, they are called concepts. And these percepts and concepts distract the mind deeply and change it. They have to be sublimated or transformed by regular contemplation of God. So, now when we make Japam or repeat the name of God, we have to form the mental image of

God in our own mind. For the mind takes the form of the object, which it contemplates and reflects upon, even as water takes the form of the vessel, which holds or contains it. Therefore, it is generally said that whatever one thinks, that he becomes ultimately. This is the law of thinking, and is universal. So, the *Sadhaka* is asked to make Japam and Dhyanam continuously for years without cessation; repeated acts create a habit, and this habit, when persisted in, becomes the nature of the person who regularly so acts and repeats. Thus through practice one can make or mar one's own nature. So, we can make our own nature what we want it to be by assiduous and intelligent practice.

Sri Krishna, therefore, commands Arjuna to fight the battle constantly thinking of Him (Krishna) and further adds that whatever object a man thinks of at the last moment when he leaves his body, that alone is reached by him because of his constant thought of that object. At the last moment, a man can think only of what he has been constantly thinking of during his life time. He cannot change it at the last moment for anything else, because of the force of his habit. The *Sadhaka* is, therefore, asked to reflect constantly upon God, even while he is engaged in various activities, so that his mind and intellect become conscious of God at all times and thus it becomes a habit due to repeated and regular practice. With this thought, if he leaves his body, he attains the object of his constant thought and adoration. So, Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna first, to practise concentration of the mind on the Lord; if he is not able to do it, *Abhyasa* or repeated practice is advised; if he finds that also too difficult to practise, the performance of all actions by him for the sake of the Lord alone has been taught. If he cannot do this even, he is asked to give up the fruits of works to the Lord, and thus practise indifference to the results of actions. In this, a *Sadhaka* may pour out constantly the contents of his mind and heart on his *Ishta Devata*, Chosen Deity, and merge his mind and heart in the Lord. Through His ideal and chosen disciple, Sri Krishna gives many alternatives to the votaries, who are of different aptitudes and inclinations as persons generally are. Free from desire and anger and attachment, the *Sadhaka* attains tranquillity of mind, and ultimately attains peace and happiness.

IV

The *Sadhaka* is not only asked to practise Japam this way, but he is enjoined to superimpose the idea of God on the world and its objects in his every day actions and dealings. By this, the *Mumukshu* is able to practise one continuous thought of God, among the diverse objects of the world. For, it has been already said that mind takes the form of the object it thinks of and contemplates. This continued Japam will gradually ripen to Dhyanam which is an unbroken and continuous thought, in which mind gets merged in the object of meditation. Continuous and undistracted contemplation, like the thread of pouring of oil from one vessel to another without break or interruption, is known as Dhyanam. If this kind of Dhyanam is continued for some time, the aspirant attains *Samadhi* (Trance). This is the goal of all *Sadhanas*.

By thinking and reflecting on evil or impure things, mind becomes evil and impure. So the *Sadhaka* is required not to see the evil, speak the evil or hear the evil of others or of this world, so that his mind may be kept pure and free from all taints and blemishes of evil and maintain its pristine purity. Just as an artificial bunch of bananas made of clay reminds one of the real and natural fruits, just as a toy-image of an elephant reminds one of the living real elephant, so the images (*Pratika & Pratima*) that are being worshipped remind one of God, Who is formless and eternal. The images are but symbols and are necessary for a beginner as a substitute for God; the mind cannot contemplate or think of what is abstract. Hence *Pratikas* and *Pratimas* are used in worship. This kind of worship is absolutely necessary for all, until one has got beyond the preparatory stages of worship. This helps Japam and Dhyanam for *Pratika* or *Pratima* stands as a suggestion. As the portrait of a person's deceased mother reminds her son of all her good acts of love, lavished on him during her life time, so the image of God should suggest to the votary in and during contemplation all the attributes of God. This kind of contemplation of *Gunas* is a higher form of Japam, than the contemplation on mere forms of deities. Then the *Sadhaka's* mind adopts those good qualities and becomes divine by constant reflection and contemplation. From contemplating and reflecting on forms, the *Sadhaka* should proceed to Gunas or qualities and from Gunas to what is *Nirguna*, and gradually to a state, when the mind ceases to function getting merged in what it contemplates on. Then the highest stage or state of Dhyanam is attained. It is known as *Samadhi* (Trance). In this state the Knower, *Jnatha*, Known, *Jneya*, and Knowledge, *Jnana*, become one. Here the *Sadhaka* becomes one with the object of worship or meditation. This is the goal and end of Dhyanam. In this manner the *Sadhaka* should practise Japam and Dhyanam, always accopanied by *Viveka* or discrimination. On the other hand, if one takes the image to be of stone or metal, to him the worship of such images does no good. The Lord, God, Who is the *Antaryamin*, inner ruler and knower of all beings and things, understands the motives or aspirations of the aspirant and rewards him as such in whatever way he may contemplate or worship Him. If a person practises for a few months or years as said above, Japam and Dhyanam becomes a habit in him and he naturally likes to continue it, for it pleases him, because he experiences peace and happiness by forgetting himself in contemplating on the object of meditation and worship.

Why is it that our mind wanders away from the object of worship? Why are we not able to fix our mind on the *Ishtamurti*, the Chosen Deity, during Japam and Dhyanam? This is not the first time man is born. The present life is one of the links in the series of the links of the chain of the person's life. It is the totality of what he had been in the past lives. The present, as such, is but his own dessert. So, the mind and senses have had their previous experiences of various things of this world in the past lives and so, naturally, due to old and past tendencies, they now run after them and cling to them as they had been used to do. The aspirant should constantly tell and educate his mind that the object of worship would give him, through the mind, eternal and ineffable peace and unmixed joy and bliss, and that the objects of the world, for which his mind longs and aspires for, through the senses, would lead ultimately to misery and nothing but misery, though they may, in the beginning, due to ignorance and lack of true discrimination, appear to be otherwise. This kind of constant *Vichara* and *Viveka* or discrimination should accompany the *Sadhaka*'s Japam and Dhyanam, so that he can easily still his mind and gradually perfect the Japam and Dhyanam. Without proper discrimination during the time of the opposite of anger, in order to counteract or neutralise it. Similarly, in the case of all evil and other unhealthy thoughts. Thus the *Sadhaka* sublimates or transmutes his *Prakriti* or nature. And the abode of this attachment and aversion, *Raga-Dvesha*, is mind which should be controlled by *Viveka-Bhuddhi* or by true discrimination. To control the mind is to control desire, and *vice versa*. This is the paramount and the primary objective of the *Sadhaka* in Japam and Dhyanam. So Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna that, that man's mind which follows the wandering senses, carries away his discrimination as a strong wind carries away a boat on the waters from its proper course. The *Sadhaka*, whose mind is unsteady due to desires and attachment, has neither meditation nor concentration, nor has he the knowledge of the object of worship (God). To him who is unable to keep his mind in tranquillity, there can be no peace. And how can one without peace have happiness? So, while his mind wanders away or strays away, the *Sadhaka* should constantly discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory, the true and the false, and should know and think that the unreal, the false and the transitory objects of the world do not or cannot give him real and abiding joy, bliss and peace. Also he should constantly reflect on the evils of birth, death, old age, etc., and go beyond delusion and grief. This the *Sadhaka* should constantly reflect and practise whenever his mind wanders away from the object of

Japam and Dhyanam, the mind would rebel against the *Sadhaka*, and refuse to yield to him however great his endeavours are.

To begin or to start with, the aspirant has little knowledge of his *Ishtamurthi* (Chosen Diety) or *Ishta-Nishta* (Chosen Ideal), and the forms of the deity he has chosen for adoration. And beyond the form of the object of worship, it is a big blank to him. The mind, therefore, naturally rebells and refuses to yield, and wanders away from the object of worship to the objects of the world and senses, of which it had previous experience in the past lives and for which it longs now also. And hence it is quite natural for the mind to follow the senses and sense objects. All beings including the wise follow their own respective *Prakriti* or nature. Here *Prakriti* means the resultant of what persons had done in their past. If it is so, is there no room for self effort? There is; else, the *Sadhana* would be meaningless; so also the scriptures, which prescribe the *Sadhana*. It is but natural to have love and attachment, *Raga*, for what we like, and hate or dislike, *Dvesha*, for what we do not like. So the real *Sadhaka* should be asked to control the mind when it goes out in the wake of the senses after sense-objects. The proper way is to practise the opposite by contrary thought, whenever the mind follows the objects of its inclination. For example, if the mind becomes angry, the *Sadhaka* should think of love, instead of suppressing or repressing those thoughts and ideas and pursuing Japam and Dhyanam, the *Sadhaka* should turn round and tell the mind that wherever it may wander, the Lord is there in that place also. He should persuade and convince the mind that it cannot go out of His jurisdiction for He is everywhere and all over. If this kind of *Vichara* or *Vitharka* is followed and repeated for some time, say for some months, the mind will become quiet and can be stilled easily.

So, we suggest that before he begins his practice of Japam and Dhyanam, the *Mumukshu* should read some scriptures like the Gita or the Bhagavatam, or some devotional hymns on Gods and Goddesses, which would prepare his mind to the task of Japam and Dhyanam. Thus by the study of scriptures a proper atmosphere for Japam and Dhyanam would be created. This would enable the *Sadhaka*, by and large, to still his mind easily. Hence it is advisable to read some scriptural texts immediately before the Japam and Dhyanam (*Sandhyas*). Also the mind should be given 10 to 15 minutes rest after the Japam so that the thoughts and ideas may settle down in the mind. The *Mumukshu* should not also enter into, engage himself or rush to, any serious affairs either domestic, social or economic, immediately after the *Sandhyas* or Japam and Dhyanam. If one does enter into any kind of activities or serious thinking of the affairs of the world soon after the Japam and Dhyanam, the whole practice gets adoration, while doing Japam and Dhyanam. If one keeps on discriminating as said above, he would naturally not only find his mind not turbulent and unyielding but gradually he can bring it under control. In this no *Sadhaka* should despair. As a bird would resolve to empty the whole of the ocean drop by drop with the help of a blade of grass, so one should strive hard to control the mind by patience and perseverance and resolutely too. If and when this is achieved, the *Sadhaka* has reached the goal he has aspired for.

The wild wanderings of the mind and its ceaseless oscillations may be lessened and curtailed to a great extent, and also effectively controlled this way: The mind moves in and among objects. There is no place where God is not. God is not only in space but He is beyond space also. God is both immanent and transcendent. It is natural for the mind to wander away on fascinating thoughts and new ideas, for the mind hates monotony. Variety is the sauce of mind. Japam and Dhyanam being repetition are mostly a monotony for the mind. For example, if the *Sadhaka* reads the morning newspapers or hears the radio before he sits for Japam and Dhyanam, the mind obviously wanders or goes after the news items and the different places it had traversed and was interested in while reading the news or listening to the radio, before he sat for Japam and Dhyanam. Then neutralised, as it were. Hence in times of old, *the Sadhaka*, from the time of his getting up from bed to the *Sandhya* time, whatever he may be doing, would be muttering some hymns or repeating the praises of Gods and would thus prepare his mind for the task of Japam and Dhyanam ahead. Now this is almost foreign to the modern *Sadhakas* due to the impact of modern civilization, and pattern of life they lead.

For the *Mumukshu* or *Sadhaka* to have a better progress towards and quicker realization of his objective, it is indeed very desirable that he should take stock of his activities of the day, before he retires to bed and strike a balance as to how much he has done for the furtherance of the aim and goal of his life. This kind of self-analysis would determine and advance his progress. After this he should, for about half an hour, repeat his formula, *Mantra*, mentally, *Japam*, before he actually lays his head on the pillow. Next day in the early hours of the morning, before he leaves his bed to pursue the activities of the day, he should repeat the same *Mantra* which he did over night. The *Sadhaka* should not take a heavy meal at night, and at least three hours should elapse between the night meal and bed time This would indeed help the *Mumukshu* to have a dreamless deep sleep, which would give him a very good relaxation and consequently good and sound health and also a clear and peaceful mind.

The mind is verily the cause of both bondage and freedom. The mind that is diverted and attached to God and Self achieves and attains peace and happiness and freedom from the thraldom of matter. That mind, which is attached to objects of the world and sense-objects, would suffer from grief and misery. The purpose of Japam and Dhyanam is to control the mind and senses.

Before the *Sadhaka* takes a final hop to merge himself with the object of worship (God or Self) there is one more enemy he has to confront, fight, and conquer. It is that which has been dragging the *Sadhaka* from death to birth and birth to death—endless without cessation. It is this enemy, who has veiled Truth or God from the aspirant or *Mumukshu* (Seeker of freedom) and thus made him suffer untold misery. It is the source or matrix of all misery we suffer from here and the cause of all bondage and the repeated births and deaths. It has defied and refused to listen to all the good lessons of experience and all the good things of life and has made man the helpless creature that he is today. It is called the Ego or the individualized self or 'I' which is also known as empirical self and which generally goes by the name of Devadatta or Gurudatta. It is this Ego or 'I' which parades in this wrold as man or woman with the respective bodies. What this Ego is and how it has come about and what its genesis is has to be ascertained and determined. We are here obliged to go into metaphysics to answer and explain this question and further clarify this doubt. It is also called the philosophy of Vedanta, as explanined by the Seers of the Upanishads. Man or woman is essentially and potentially divine. It is due to ignorance of his or her real nature, as a result of *Adhyasa or Adhyaropa* (super-imposition of one quality of a thing on another), that man or woman who is essentially divine, thinks and imagines that he or she is human, and thus superimposes the qualities of Atman (Spirit) on the body, and consequently identifies himself or herself with body and its aggregates, *Antahkarnas*, inner senses like *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Chitta and Ahamkara*; and hence he or she has the *Dehatma-Buddhi*. That is, the Atman which is the real Self is taken to be body, etc., due to ignorance of Atman, and attachment to body and senses. Brahman or abolute Truth which is Pure Consciousness, when It associates Itself with the Suddha Satva of the Maya or cosmic ignorance is called Iswara or Personal God. When the same Brahman or Truth identifies Itself with *Avidya* or ignorance in which *Tamas* predominates and which is part of Maya, It is called individualised self or Jivatman. This is man or woman when the Self identifies itself with the respective bodies of man or woman. Hence the inmost Self in man is divine. In the Bible this is spoken of as the fall of Adam, the first man, due to temptation of Satan, the enemy of God, through Eve, the first woman, the companion of Adam. In truth it should be said, not as the fall of man but the fall of God! Man, as such, is a fallen God, who has lost his pristine purity due to desires and temptations. The aim and objective of life is, therefore, to regain and restore this original state of purity or perfection of man, i. e., the divine or the God-head. According to Hindu scriptures, man who is divine or Atman has identified himself, due to ignorance, with the body and senses. So God or Atman is the inmost Self of man. Therefore, God, is, as already stated, dearer than all the dearest things of the world. To know and realize this fact that man or woman is God or Atman, is the objective of life on this earth. Man or woman is a pilgrim in this world, the quest being to realize his or her real and true nature, which is Atman, or God. From this analysis we can easily deduce that our Ego or 'I' or the empirical self is but a reflection or a copy of the original Self, which is known as Atman, God, or Truth. If we ponder over deeply, there is no such thing as Ego or 'I' except in relation to body and senses in our waking experience, and in relation to the mind in our dream experience.

Reflection and copy are not real, and from the unreal, one cannot get real and true happiness. So, when God or the Truth or Atman identifies itself with the body and senses, Ego or 'I' has come into being. Devadatta and Gurudatta are none but God in essence; but not knowing this fact, they play the fools! Or may we say God has taken the role of man and woman, and plays this drama in the theatre of this world for His own *Leela* or sports, even as man takes the part or role of kings and beggars in dramas or stages of this world? This fact need not mystify us, for we know and have our experience evey night in dreamless deep sleep. In the dreamless deep sleep the sleeping person is neither man nor woman, neither rich nor poor, neither young nor old, neither learned nor ignorant. All forms and qualifications and qualities disappear. Only Consciousness remains and that is our every day experience. This Consciousness co-ordinates the sleep experience with the waking state. In fact, it is this Consciousness that co-ordinates the experiences of dream, deep-sleep and the waking states. For the Ego in dream is different from the waking-Ego and in deep sleep the Ego is absent due to non-functioning of the mind. This Consciousness is common in the three states of waking, dream and deep-sleep states. For no man sleeps as Devadatta or Gurudatta. If one is aware of his psycho-physical being, he is no more in sleep. The aspirant, *Sadhaka* or *Mumukshu*, strives to bring about this state of complete forgetfulness of body idea or the Ego, in and through Dhyanam or meditation. When the aspirant becomes one with Atman, and realizes and experiences that he is neither the body nor the senses, nor the mind, then it is called *Samadhi*. He is the Atman, which is Pure Consciousness and a Witness of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless deep sleep. In this state, all doubt, grief, and delusion cease, and one would enjoy perfect peace and tranquillity. The body, senses and mind cease functioning in their respective spheres. The desires of the body and senses for food, sex, etc., exist no longer there. Body and senses including mind function in their respective spheres due to the association of the Consciousness. When the Consciousness is withdrawn from them they cease to function. In the absence of mind's functioning among sense objects, happiness or misery derived through mind and senses totally disappear. Happiness and misery are waves on the *Chitta* or states of mind according to its reaction on the things of the world. And when these are eliminated or annihilated, awareness or Consciousness without any content alone remains. Such Consciousness, as it is always a Witness, *Sakshi*, is bliss itself and hence only bliss is experienced. One who has attained this perfection experiences that bliss even in the experiences of his waking state when the mind functions, even as relaxation of the deep sleep is known only after waking from it.

Therefore, we come to this inescapable conclusion that it is this Ego, or 'I' or empirical self, which is in the way of realizing our real Self or nature. The real Self is bliss itself. This fact is veiled, and not experienced because we identify the Pure Consciousness with Ego or 'I' or with the body. Hence in place 'of bliss, grief or misery is experienced. When we are 'Ego-centered', we are human; when we are 'God-centered', we are divine. This is the ascent of man to his original pristine purity. This is known as *Sadyo-mukti* (freedom while alive) in Vedanta. Therefore, this Ego, empirical self or 'I', has to be eliminated, annihilated and sublimated sooner than later. If it is so to be obliterated, shall we commit suicide? No, far from it. All the various practices in the name of the *Sadhana* as Japam and Dhyanam are to sublimate, transform or eliminate this Ego or 'I', which is the standing barrier between the Atman or God and us. We shall see presently, how we are endeavouring to sublimate and transform this Ego to get at the real source of life or our true nature, which is our inmost Self, and which is known as Atman.

V

From the foregoing analysis we come to the conclusion that man or woman is no more than body-awareness. In other words, man or woman is what we call an empirical self, Ego or body-consciousness; and the real Self is his or her inner-most Consciousness. From this one can realize that there is no real or permanent entity like individualised 'I' or Ego, because, Ego changes according to the respective *Upadhis* or adjuncts. Not only that, the Ego changes according to different relationships in social life, for example, the Ego as father is not the same Ego as husband, or as brother or as friend. This is compared to two birds perching on the self-same tree, in the Upanishad, and two selves lower and higher in the Gita. The lower bird and the lower self refer to Jivatman (the empirical self). Furthermore, this lower bird and the lower self, in their ultimate analysis are found to be reflections of the higher bird and the higher self. In the Mundaka Upanishad it is described as follows : Two birds of beautiful plumage are perched on the self-same tree. One of them, the lower bird, eats sweet and bitter fruits of the tree by turns, and enjoys and suffers respectively. The other bird, the higher one, without eating the fruits simply looks on. Here the lower bird refers to Jivatman and the higher bird to Paramatman. Both these dwell in the self-same tree, the body. They both cling together because the Jivatman is but the reflection of the Paramatman. While Jivatman identifying itself with the body, experiences the fruits of action, good and bad, the Paramatman without that identification remains as a mere witness. While the Jivatman suffers due to ignorance, Paramatman as a witness always enjoys bliss. Thus Jivatman, through the repeated experiences of misery, draws itself closer and closer to Paramatman, Who is free from misery. At long last the Jivatman realizes itself as none other than Paramatman; then the Jivatman becomes free from birth, death, old age, grief and misery, and enjoys abiding peace and unalloyed happiness. This state is known as *Jivanmukti*, becoming free and happy in this life and here in this world. Then all the worldly activities of the Jivatman cease, even as water ceases to flow when it reaches the ocean.

In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that a man should uplift himself by his own self. As in the Upanishad, so in the Gita, the Self is treated as higher and lower only for the sake of practice of perfection and integration. While the lower self is full of animal propensities, due to its identity with the gross body and senses, the higher Self is free from all desires, due to its non-identification with anything like body and senses. The author of the Gita says that the lower self acts, if not controlled, as an enemy of the *Sadhaka*. Hence it is said, "the self is the friend of the Self, and the self is the enemy of the Self." Therefore, the *Sadhaka* is asked to control the lower self and gradually integrate it with the higher Self. The lower self, which is constituted by the *Antahkarna* (aggregate of internal senses like *chitta*, ego, mind and *buddhi*) should be merged with the higher Self or Atman, which is the inmost Consciousness. This integration of the lower self with the higher Self is what is meant when it is said that a man should uplift himself by his own self.

The analogies of these two birds and two selves are beautifully explained by Sri Ramakrishna in his own inimitable way in the parable of the sheep-lion and the jungle-lion. It is as follows: Once a lioness attacked a flock of sheep. When she pounced on the flock, she gave birth to a cub and died. The cub grew among the sheep into a big lion. One day another lion from the jungle came and attacked the same flock. The jungle-lion was surprised to see a grown up lion among the flock of sheep running away, bleating like a sheep ! The jungle-lion seized and dragged the other lion (sheep-lion) from the flock and took it to a pond. Looking at its own reflection and comparing it with the face of the jungle-lion, the sheep-lion came to know that it was also a lion, and not one of the sheep. It was made to eat flesh and roar, instead of eating grass and bleating like a sheep. The sheep-lion which had hypnotised itself as a sheep now did come to realize its real and own nature, as was pointed out by the jungle-lion, and thereafter ate flesh and roared like its species. The sheep-lion afterwards retired to the jungle with the knowledge and experience of its true nature, as a free lion and king of the jungle animals.

From the above examples and parable, it is now clear that the higher bird and higher Self alone are true. The lion's identity with the sheep made it feel that it was also a sheep, forgetting its own real nature as lion. Similarly, man, by identifying himself, with the body due to ignorance, thinks, feels and acts as Gurudatta or Devadatta, not knowing or forgetting his real nature, which is Pure Consciousness or Atman. And this Atman is identical with Brahman, the Soul of the universe, which is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss absolute. We have, therefore, to dis-identify or de-hypnotise ourselves from the body-mind consciousness (Ego) or the idea of psycho-physical being (*Dehatma-Buddhi*), to know our real nature. As the sheep-lion learnt and realized its true nature from the jungle-lion, the *Sadhaka* realizes his own real nature, through the help of his Guru or the Teacher. This fact that we are no mere psycho-physical being is realized through Japam and Dhyanam on God, Who is the symbol of Brahman or Atman. In this practice we endeavour to integrate, as repeatedly pointed out above, the lower self with the higher Self or higher personality, as illustrated in the two birds of the Upanishad or the parable of lions by Sri Ramakrishna.

As the clouds cover the sun, so Egoism or 'I' veils God from us. The true nature, which is Pure Consciousness of man, is eternal knowledge and bliss. Because of Ego or the individualised 'I' which is limited by adjuncts (Upadhis), the true nature, is veiled. That is to say, when Paramatman idenfies itself, due to ignorance and delusion, with the body and senses, It (Paramatman) becomes Jivatman who suffers from grief, misery, birth and death. The Ego, 'I' or individual personality of man is a mere phenomenon, which is continuously changing every moment and hence unreal.

For example, a person who is a judge in the court, does not continue the same Ego he has had in the court, when he returns home and joins his wife and children as husband and father. The 'I' as the 'husband' or 'father' changes again, when he visits his club as its president. The Ego of the court is different from the Ego of the house, which is again different from the Ego of the club; though the person is the same throughout, the 'Ego' or the 'I' continuously changes. Similarly, a man of sixty, if he has the portraits of his childhood, youth, adolescence, etc., he can easily discern that though all the portraits are of the same person, his bodies in the different stages have undergone complete changes, where one body cannot be identified with another by his friend. This is because, though the consciousness is the same in all, the bodies have changed beyond recognition from one stage to another. In the first example, the Ego changes according to its different positions in environments; in the second, it is clear that though the body is changed beyond recognition, the identity is maintained because the Consciousness underlying is the same. From this it is clear that the Ego changes continuously according to the environment and changes of the body.

So, the devotee, *Bhakta*, with a view to annihilating or transmuting his Ego by surrendering himself to God, says "O Lord! Thou art the Doer, *Karta*; Thou doest everything. I am but an instrument in Thy hands. I do whatever Thou makest me do. This home, this family, are all Thine and not mine. I have only the right to serve Thee." So, the *Bhakta* makes the individualised 'I' or Ego remain as the servant of God or a devotee of God or as the servant of God's servant, *Dasanudasa*. Thus the *Bhakta*, *Sadhaka*, sublimates and eliminates the Ego or 'I' by prayers and complete self-surrender. When 'I' or Ego shall cease to be, one shall attain freedom. For the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' is ignorance. So, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he alone attains peace who is without the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' (*Nirmama-Nirahamkara*). In Japam and Dhyanam the votary (*Bhakta*) endeavours to merge his 'I' or Ego in the Lord. It is the constant striving of the aspirant to merge the 'I' or Ego in God through devotion unto God, or by selfless work, keeping Him as the goal. In selfless work, the aspirant works for God as his goal. Sri Krishna says, "He who works for Me alone, and has Me for his goal, is devoted to Me, he reaches Me." Sri Krishna also asks the devotee or worshipper to make complete self-surrender at the feet of God. *Bhakti* (love) in its initial or preparatory stage is known as *Gauni-Bhakti*; when the same ripens, it is known as *Para-Bhakti*, supreme devotion, for the *Ishta Devata* or the Chosen Deity. Then the devotee or votary sees his Lord in all things, as all. Therefore the Gita says, that those who devote themselves to Lord alone cross over the illusion of *Samsara* or *Maya* and that He (God) looks after their *Yogakshemam* (welfare). The Lord further avers that His devotee will never perish and further he asks the *Sadhaka* to give up all *Dharmas* and

Adharmas and take complete refuge at His lotus feet when he will give the *Sadhaka*, *Mokska* or freedom from the thraldom of matter. Through this kind of devotion and self-surrender to Lord, the aspirant eliminates his Ego or 'I'. This Ego has been the cause of all ignorance and consequently of delusion and grief. This kind of practice is comparatively easier than the other paths of *Sadhana.* This is done by practising Japam and Dhyanam regularly and methodically and systematically.

But a Jnani eliminates or sublimates the Ego or 'I' through, *Viveka*, discriminative process like this : With a view to attaining Self or Atman which is Pure Consciousness and eternal, the Jnani negates the things and objects of the world and objects of dream experience as "not this, not this" and begins to discriminate about his own body, which also forms part of the world. To a Jnani not only his body and senses but his mind, Ego, and 'I' are all objects, *Drishyam*, and hence all of these are unreal objects. He questions himself as "What is Self ?"; "Are my head, hands, feet, body, senses and mind the Self ?" Pondering over deeply and analysing like this, he takes off one limb after another as peeling off the skin of an onion saying "I am not the head, body, senses or mind or even the aggregates of the body and senses". Such an analysis finally convinces him (Jnani) that the ultimate substance is his own Self or Atman, which is Pure Consciousness. And this Atman, which is his inmost being, is one with Paramatman. When the Ego or 'I' is effaced or eliminated, the Jivatman dies, as it were, even as, when camphor is burnt no residue is left behind. Thus when the process of discrimination ends, Atman or Brahman is revealed and realized. When the 'I' or Egotism thus drops away, the Divine manifests itself. Then Atman or God is realized within one's own Self as one's own inmost being, as Pure Consciousness. The Lord, Whom we have been searching for in hills and dales, temples, mosques and churches, at last is found in the cave of our own hearts. He, who sees God and worships Him as such in temples alone, disrespecting and illtreating the God enshrined in man, is an enemy of God. Thus Self-realization or God-realization is attained, and through it, freedom and eternal bliss. When the Ego completely vanishes or dies, along with it ceases the 'I' or Devadatta. And this practice is called Dhyanam through *Viveka* or discrimination.

The complete elimination of Ego or 'I' as an individual personality does not satisfy the so-called realists who aver that they would have nothing to do with such an absurd attitude or approach to life! This is because of their extreme love of and attachment to, the body, the senses and the objects of senses. If we pause and reflect awhile, there is little room for such a fear. It is within our own daily experience that we have the highest and most real happiness only when we do not at all have the awareness of body, or when we completely forget the body and its aggregates, as we know and experience in our dreamless deep sleep. In that state the consciousness of body, Ego or 'I' is totally absent and ceases to be, including mind. If there be any trace of either Ego or 'I' or body consciousness, it is either dream or waking state, because of the functioning of mind. The so-called personality of the waking person disappears in toto as none sleeps with the awarness of the body as a psycho-physical being or with the awareness of objects of the world. We then derive and experience the greatest relaxation and ease and consequently peace and happiness. Neither are we aware of any trace of our waking mind with its desires and vagaries, in that state of deep sleep. Psychiatrists and physicians knowing this fact fully well, give their patients suggestions and narcotics respectively, as the case may be, to make their patients go to sleep and thus make the patients forget their body and its ailments. When the patients forget their bodies, they get relaxation, rest and temporary cure, as it were, from their maladies. The same forgetfulness of the body is brought about more or less by a poet, musician or an artist while they are deeply engaged in their respective arts and sciences, or by a drunkard in the state of introxication. In all these cases, if one analyses carefully and critically, he will come to know that forgetfulness of the body or the so-called personality as Devadatta or Vishnupriya, immediately results in peace and happiness. From this, one can easily deduce that he or she enjoys most when his or her Ego or 'I' or the personality, is entirely integrated with the inmost Self, and thus negated, or sublimated. We know that the Ego sense is absent completely at the time of sleep, and with poets and musicians while engaged in their respective arts, and also with the drunkard while drunk. Consequently, they all experience peace and happiness.

All living beings of this world like to have and incessantly long for eternal peace and unmixed happiness. None of them courts or desires grief and misery. None of the human beings is fully satisfied with comfort, joy and happiness that the senses and sense objects bring him, because such happiness is mixed, as we know, with misery and it is also transitory. All thinking persons eagerly long to have abiding peace and eternal and unmixed joy or bliss, which they do not find in men, women, children, wealth or possession. Knowing and realizing these things, the Sages of yore said : Real, eternal and abiding peace and happiness can be got only from the realization of Atman or God and from nothing else, nothing else.

This is and should be the aim of life. This is the perennial value of life and the eternal quest of human life. God alone abideth for ever and all else is transitory. Thus Vedanta has made this invaluable contribution through the centuries for the eternal verities of human life, and this forms the bed rock of our heritage and culture, which alone can give man true and abiding peace and happiness. Therefore, all else is vanity of vanities.

VI

At this stage, it would be advantageous to know the secret of mind control. It should be known that the mind comes into being with the rise of desires in us. To control the mind is, therefore, to control the desire. And the control of desire is, to sublimate and not to suppress or repress the desire. That is to say, instead of desiring the objects of senses, the same desire or mind should be devoted and attached to God or reflection of Self. The mind, *Manas*, is one of the four *Antahkarnas* (internal organs), the others are *Chitta*, *Buddhi* and *Ahamkara*. *Manas*, *Buddhi* and *Ahamkara* are the three different functions or urges or impulses of the *Chitta*, in which all the tendencies (*Samaskaras*) inhere or are deposited. When any idea crops up within, or any object or event presents itself from without, the mind traces it to its previous source of knowledge. *Buddhi* immediately comes to its rescue and determines what it is, then *Ahamkara* identifies itself with its previous knowledge and experience. This is how the four respective internal organs (*Antahkarnas*) function. Mind (*Manas*) according to Sankara is *Sankalpa* and *Vikalpa*. *Sankalpa* is reflecting and contemplating to do certain things in a certain way, and *Vikalpa* is the indefinite perception or a vague knowledge of diverse things of the external world. Then *Buddhi* (intellect) should help the mind in determining actually what the percepts are; then knowledge is experienced. The mind can hardly be perceived and known beyond imagination and perception, and desire for things. According to experimental Psychology, the mind is something like a reservoir of all impressions, desires, impulses, cravings, wishes, etc. Of these, desires of hunger, sex, self-preservation, gregariousness, acquisitiveness and pugnacity predominate and these are known as fundamental instincts of a being. According to this branch of science, mind is not merely awareness or consciousness of sensations, perceptions or ideas, but something more. The conscious part of the mind is, according to Psychology, about one-tenth of the whole of mind, the other or the remaining nine-tenths constitute sub-conscious and unconscious parts of the mind. The sub-conscious mind is just below the conscious mind. This sub-conscious mind is and constitutes the suppressed and repressed desires of the waking state of this life. The Ego, acting as a censor by day, does not allow these suppressed and repressed desires to come up from the sub-conscious to the surface or conscious part of the mind. These are mostly the frustrated desires, which form 'Complexes' in the sub-conscious mind, according to the Psycho-analysts.

What then is a "Complex"? The suppressed and repressed desires, which are not allowed to have their normal satisfaction form "Complexes" in the sub-conscious mind. These frustrated urges and desires of the sub-conscious mind form a 'Complex', which creates mental abnormality and thus makes the mind unhealthy and neurotic. Through it, the body becomes diseased, because of neurosis. Mind and body have a close relation. In fact, the mind is the subtle body and body is the gross mind. Whatever may happen to the mind it has its repercussion on the body, and *vice versa*; each acts and reacts on the other. The "Complex" is formed, we repeat, by suppressing and repressing the frustrated desires. To "Resolve a Complex" is to allow the suppressed and repressed desires to have their satisfaction in a most normal and healthy way. It is known as sublimation, in Psychology. For example, the flowing water of a river is stored up by an annicut or dam in a reservoir. The pressure of the river water of the reservoir may cause a breach in the dam, if the excess of water is not let out in time through a canal. The intelligent farmer lets the stored water of the reservoir through an artificial irrigation channel for cultivation of the lands. Thus he uses the extra water and avoids extra pressure to the dam, which may otherwise cause a breach in the annicut. Similarly, a shrewd and thinking person should, in time, sublimate his repressed and suppressed desires to avoid neurosis or psychosis, and thus resolve the "Complex." Most of the maladies, we suffer from in our present day world, are due to our inability to "Resolve the Complexes" in time and this results in functional and even organic disorders of the body. Hence is the suffering of the sick-world today, which is all due to our most artificial life we live and have in society. Therefore, the *Sadhaka* should be particularly careful to avoid the formation of "Complexes" in the sub-conscious mind. But it is difficult to do so in our present-day life due to lack of control of the senses and of the desires. So the sub-conscious mind with disappointed urges, conflicts and desires may act as a mine, if not sublimated in time in the life of an individual, and when it explodes, he becomes a neurotic and, as said above, suffers from various maladies of functional and organic nature.

Every normal man, not to speak of a *Sadhaka*, who wants to live a normal life should endeavour to eliminate or sublimate these conflicts and abnormal desires, which are frustrated. If they are not properly sublimated and the complexes "resolved" as the Psycho-analysts would put it, "psycho-somatism" takes place, due to maladjustment and non-adaptation to the environment. This is followed also by various maladies of functional and organic nature, as said above. This "psycho-somatism" is now admitted and recognised by the physicians also. We have dealt with the contents of the mind in sufficient detail, because it is the most important factor in Japam and Dhyanam. The vagaries and vacillations of the mind are all due to the diverse conflicts of the sub-conscious mind, which make mind-control very difficult for the *Sadhaka*. What about the unconcious mind?

The unconscious mind, according to the Psycho-analysts, is the racial mind of the individual. The fundamentals of racial habit or tendencies of the individual are imbedded in it. This is the source of the subconscious and conscious mind, and may, to a great extent, change, modify or influence the nature of a person. These conscious, sub-conscious and un-conscious minds should not be treated or taken as water-tight and separate compartments. Each of them is a phase or an aspect of the mind, all of which together constitute the whole of mind. In Japam and Dhyanam, we are mostly concerned with the conscious and sub-conscious minds. Unconscious mind may remain passive and dormant, if the conscious and sub-conscious minds are well controlled, and ultimately transformed. While we are engaged in the practice of Japam and Dhyanam, we strive hard to eliminate or eradicate all the other thoughts and desires from the conscious mind and contemplate on the object of worship to the exclusion of all the other thoughts and desires. In attempting to do so and making a clean sweep of the surface, all the subconscious impulses and tendencies struggle to come up to the conscious plane or surface of the mind to fill in the vacuum. This is why, during Dhyanam, we often find that old experiences or thoughts come up. These dormant thoughts were lurking in the

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sub-conscious in seed form and try to assert when the conscious mind becomes clean. The *Sadhaka* has, therefore, to obliterate or eradicate, little by little, gradually, all the contents of the sub-conscious mind when the conscious mind becomes pure, free from impulses and desires which were lurkng in the conscious and sub-conscious minds. In this attempt or endeavour, the aspirant should not suppress or repress the thoughts and desires but sublimate and transform them, as we have repeatedly stated above, through discrimination (*Vichara* or *Vitharka*). The process of suppression and repression again may send them (desires) under-ground or to the sub-conscious state, and they may come up again and again. The past tendencies and impulses may also supplement and replenish the sub-conscious mind, if the aspirant is not vigilant. When, by the regular process of Japam and Dhyanam with discrimination and dispassion, the tendencies, impluses and desires are completely eradicated, the vagaries and vacillations of the mind would cease. This would result in continuous and unbroken contemplation of the object of our adoration. The mind can then be stilled into serenity. Mind-control is not only essential for the *Sadhakas* and *Mumukshus*, but is indispensable to all persons of all ranks and various avocations of life, to live up to successful life. Persons, who have control of mind, have little difficulty in attaining their aims of life. In fact, with mind control, the goal is almost reached.

Prayers should precede and follow Japam and Dhyanam, as we have stated elsewhere. Prayers bind a devotee to his *Ishta-Nishta*, ideal or God. Prayer is an attitude, approach or an earnest entreaty of a votary to God.

From the foregoing pages, we have come to realize that we are potentially divine. Then, true life should, therefore, be and ought to be, to live in tune with spirit (divine), which we are essentially and potentially. To live in tune with the aggregates of body as we do now, is, therefore, obviously unreal, if not unnatural. For we live, move and have our being in Spirit or God. True prayer is a constant remembrance of this fact and a conscious and cotninuous striving to live up to that stage, so that we do not feel we are at all separate from God. This is to practise the presence of God and realize that all things and objects are in God even as bubbles and waves are in the ocean. This is how we can see the whole world in God and as God. It is the greatest and best prayer, when the Ego is thus displaced by the presence of God, and God is replaced and installed in its (Ego's) stead in the heart, which is the abode of God (Atman).

The conative urge of the aspirant is to reach the Self or God; it is the greatest prayer—nay the greatest austerity, to bring about the identity and concordance of thought, word and deed. Prayers purify soul, just as earth and water purify and clean the body of its dirt. Prayers are addressed to God with a view to contacting Him; these prayers should become a spontaneous supplication as a child does to its mother. The aspirant shoud become as guileless as a child. Then only do his prayers become effective and then he reaches God. Humility, simplicity, openness and straightforwardness would take us nearer to God and enable the *Mumukshu* to quickly earn His grace and blessings. Prayer with these requisites endears God to the votary and the votary to his God.

We have been told a great deal about prayer and fasting, from our early days. As generally undertood, prayer is an act of making devout and earnest supplication to God; and fasting is to keep away from or going without food, or abstain from eating. If this is so, prayer and fasting can rarely go together. For, as we know, a hungry person cannot easily take away his mind from hunger or body-consciousness and fix it on God. If, as *Sadhakas*, we are to fast, the advice of the author of the Gita will be in vain: "Success in Yoga," says the Gita, "is not for him who eats too much or too little............but to him who is temperate in eating and recreation, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery." We should particularly note the words "temperate in eating." It is not said that one should not eat at all. This is pertinent because the advice in this chapter of the Gita is for practising Dhyanam. And hence the very next verse concludes by exhorting the *Mumukshu* that "when the completely controlled mind rests serenely in the Self alone,............then is one called steadfast." So, the objective of prayer, Japam or Dhyanam is complete control of mind by following a temperate and golden mean of life in eating and recreation.

Fasting without taking food, no doubt, would do good to the gross physical body when one is suffering from constipation, indigestion or fever. And this may indirectly help to maintain a good health. On the other hand, if we may use prayer and fasting as synonymous words, then it would be as follows: 'To pray is to fast and to fast is to pray.' Prayer is constantly dwelling, contemplating or reflecting on God. In this act or endeavour, the senses cannot go out to seek their enjoyment in the objects of the world. So, it is obviously a fast for the senses. In communion with Self or God, the senses are controlled and then too it is like a fast to the senses. So, to fast is to control the senses from preying on the sense objects, which means abstinence. And abstinence, in turn, means communion with our real nature which is tantamount to prayer. Fasting in sanskrit is *Upavasa*, compounded out of *Upa* meaning 'near' or 'close' and *Vasa* meaning to live. That is, to live near or close to the Self, Atman or God. When a person lives near the Self, Atman or God, he keeps away from his body, from the senses and the objects of the senses. To live near or in God is to continuously think of God, to meditate on Him. The more one is Atman-conscious, the less is he body-conscious. To direct the mind towards God, or Atman, one must withdraw it from the body and its needs. Such a person or *purusha* dies in the flesh, but lives in the spirit or Self within.

Communion with the Self is the essence of prayer — it is *Sva Svarupa anusandhanam.* That is exactly the purpose of fasting, in its true *adhyatmika* interpretation. Both keep a person *en rapport* with God and in that sense they — fasting and praying, are synonymous. Even as in the case of ceremonials of worship (*Upasana*) the *attitude* which is the internal substance of worship lapses into the *act* (mechanical) which is its mere external form, so also in fasting its essence of spiritual communion gives place to the gross form of mere physical abstinence from food due to perhaps long lapse of time, and in its *Vyavaharika* sense. Probably this poetic sense of fast was lost and taken literally later on and treated as physical fasting, which has little bearing on prayer. So, complete physical fast is not advised, because it stands in the way of communion of the mind with God.

Similarly, *Maunam* or Silence. By abstaining from speech or noise, one can hear the "small inner voice" from within, which is the same as communing with the inmost Self. Hence it is said, silence is golden. This is also to control not only vocal organ, but all the other organs of the body, when only complete silence is possible. One who has attained this state is called or known as *Muni*, that is, *Stitha-Prajna*, a man of steady wisdom, who has controlled himself by casting away all the desires of the mind and heart. A *Muni* is one, who has attained steady wisdom. "He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness, who has become free from affection, fear and wrath, is indeed the *Muni* of steady wisdom." In this state, the *Muni* becomes a man of meditation. "His wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control." This is the result of *Maunam* or maintaining Silence.

This state of *Maunam* is dragged down, as it is in the case of fasting. It is within our experience how the modern man acts, when he professes to maintain silence. They do not, of course, use their vocal organ, but use slates and other materials to convey their thoughts. It is a laborious process, and very often they use the whole body to express themselves, keeping of course the lips closed! Real silence (*Maunam*) and fast should contribute to sincere and purposeful prayer, when one goes beyond body, mind and senses, and communes with one's own inmost Self or Atman. Thus fasting and silence not only help prayer but become prayer itself.

The more we progress and advance towards God and Self, the farther away we have left behind all desires for the world and its sordid things. The meditate on Him. The more one is Atman-conscious, the less is he body-conscious. To direct the mind towards God, or Atman, one must withdraw it from the body and its needs. Such a person or *purusha* dies in the flesh, but lives in the spirit or Self within.

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This state of *Maunam* is dragged down, as it is in the case of fasting. It is within our experience how the modern man acts, when he professes to maintain silence. They do not, of course, use their vocal organ, but use slates and other materials to convey their thoughts. It is a laborious process, and very often they use the whole body to express themselves, keeping of course the lips closed! Real silence (*Maunam*) and fast should contribute to sincere and purposeful prayer, when one goes beyond body, mind and senses, and communes with one's own inmost Self or Atman. Thus fasting and silence not only help prayer but become prayer itself.

The more we progress and advance towards God and Self, the farther away we have left behind all desires for the world and its sordid things. The after Him, by His light everything is lighted." When the *Sadhaka* or *Mumukshu* reaches this state, he has thus realized his own Atman as Brahman, the Absolute Truth; he then becomes a Sage and then declares that Brahman alone is Real—Brahman alone exists. He then sees no diversity—but only unity, for he sees the Lord everywhere. God is beheld in all things and beings, and all beings and things in God. All that one perceives as objects of the world including his own body, are nothing but Brahman essentially and potentially, but the objects appear real due to ignorance. When Brahman or Truth passes through the mould of one's mind, one sees the same Brahman as objects of the universe with names and forms, even as light is seen in seven colours when it passes through a prism and projected as spectrum. The universe is seen in the place of Brahman; the body and the mind take the place of, and are perceived for, the Atman; both these are due to ignorance. Both Brahman and Atman are Pure Consciousness, which remains always a Witness of all the states of life waking, dream and deep sleep. When the Truth is known, the *Sadhaka* or *Mumukshu* becomes immortal and goes beyond fear, birth and death, and enjoys abiding joy and bliss and eternal peace that passeth all understanding: "Words cannot express Thee; intellect cannot know Thee; senses cannot find Thee; mind cannot conceive Thee: Thou art beyond all." Vouchsafe, therefore, Thyself unto us!

mind and the desires that are attached to the objects of the senses and the world, act as hindrances and obstacles. On the other hand, the same mind and desires devoted to God and Self, help us and take us to God and Self with little delay. Thus the lower mind or lower self, which live in tune with animal and brute propensities, should be eradicated or integrated with the higher Self which is the real personality of the *Sadhaka* and which is Pure Consciousness. This Pure Consciousness is symbolised by the theologians as God, and the Vedantins call it Atman. This Atman is Brahman. This fact that Atman is Brahman is the Absolute Truth of the Vedanta. Therefore, know God, Atman or Brahman and be free from delusion and grief, and enjoy eternal peace and unmixed bliss. This experience is achieved by prayers, *Pooja*, Japam and Dhyanam and through the grace of God, for which the *Sadhaka* or *Mumukshu* has dedicated himself in his quest after abiding happiness. We shall know this Truth, and Truth shall make us free and happy.

The Upanishad thus describes the fruit or result of Self Knowledge: "The fetters of the heart are broken, all doubts are resolved, and all works cease to bear fruit, when He is beheld Who is both high and low." And Atman or Brahman is the light of lights. "The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, not to speak of this fire. When He shines, everything else shines

VII

What we have described in the foregoing pages as hints on Japam and Dhyanam can be perceived clearly in the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his *Sadhanas*. As a priest in the Kali temple at Dakshineswar, and as a dualist and a devotee, he worshipped the Mother of the Universe as Kali, Who was his *Ishta Devata* or Chosen Deity. He used at the time of *Pooja* or worship various rituals and ceremonials in the beginning. After a few years of such practice and worship he passed beyond the stage of formal, ceremonial and ritualistic worship and reached a state, where he was seized with a longing and intense desire for realizing the direct vision of the Divine Mother. To that end he would engage himself all day and night, unmindful of inconveniences and difficulties, in deep meditation in the lonely woods near the temple garden where he had taken his abode. At last, he was blessed with the direct vision of the Mother as Personal Goddess known as Kali. Thereafter, he followed the time honoured worship of Rama, Krishna and other deities of the Hindu pantheon; he also practised the *Sadhanas* of Islam and Christianity and found out for himself, as a scientist would in the laboratory, that these so many religions are indeed so many paths leading to the same goal of God-realization. This was the unique feature in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He, therefore, did not want a Hindu, a Christian or a Muslim to change his religion, but he

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